

7747
A N
A P O L O G Y
FOR THE
CLERGY,
IN A
L E T T E R
T O A

GENTLEMAN of FORTUNE,
and great READING,

Lately turn'd

Methodist and Hermit:

Wherein is

Shewn the Weakness of those OBJECTIONS,
Which Separatists in general pretend first induc'd
them to leave the Establish'd CHURCH, and to
look out for better GUIDES somewhere else.

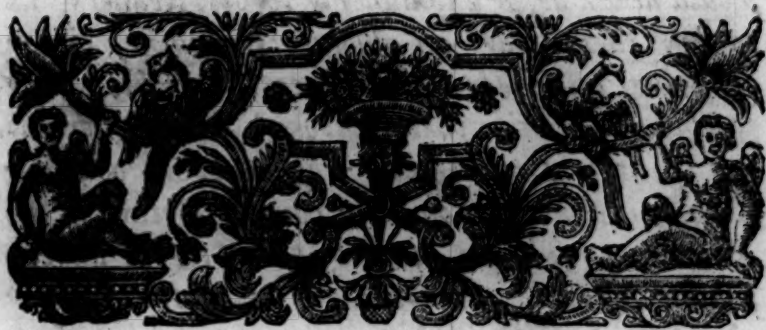
By J. MAUD, M. A.

Vicar of St. Neots, in the County of Huntingdon.

C A M B R I D G E :

Printed by R. WALKER, and T. JAMES, next
the Theatre Coffee House, 1745.





THE
P R E F A C E.



S a long Preface to a little Book is out of all Kind of Taste and Proportion, and has upon that Account, been often compared to a large pompous Porch before a small House; so I think a Book with no Preface at all, is just like a House that has no Windows on that Side you are to go in; the House may possibly have Light enough within from some other Quarter, but it gives a very melancholy forbidding Prospect to the Eyes of the Beholder. A long tedious Preface, to be sure, can answer no other End, but to swell out the Book; yet I think something of this Sort is necessary, to give the Reader a short

A 2

Sketch

Sketch of the Author's Design. An Author should never be so unmannerly to his Readers, as to lay them under an absolute Restraint, either of going quite thro' his Treatise (which may possibly not requite their Labour) or else, throwing it utterly aside; but like a civil obliging Cook, give his Customers a concise Detail of his Provisions, without putting them to the unreasonable Trouble to rumage over the Larder themselves, and then every one is at Liberty to take, or leave as likes him best.

My Design then, in the following Apology for the Clergy, is, in the first Place, to root out those unhappy Prejudices, which are harbour'd and cherish'd against this Order of Men, not by Dissenters alone, but by those Men, who (if they are of any Religion at all) pass for Members of the establish'd Church; and, in the next Place, to give a serious Hint to those unthinking Clergymen, who, by their indiscreet and negligent Lives, may have given too much Handle for those Objections, which are made Pleas of by Dissenters, in Defence of Separation. For we of the Clergy ought to remember, that notwithstanding these Objections, are but weak Reasons in Defence of Separation; yet, they are very strong ones, why we should endeavour to remove them; and by the Excellency of our Lives, as well as Doctrines, to take away this Stumbling-Block, at which it is pretended so many of our weak Brethren stumble and fall.

fall. For tho' an infamous-living Clergyman, is but a sorry Plea in Defence of Schism; yet it will be found a fearful Aggravation of that Man's Crime, who has given the Separatists this seemingly plausible Handle for leaving the Church; and that which is their Defence, will be our Condemnation. We are told indeed, by the unerring Lip of Truth, that it is impossible, but Offences will come; but this absolute Certainty of their coming, is so far from being any Excuse to the Man, who has any hand in them, that there is a most emphatical Wo denounced against that Man by whom the Offence cometh. And that we might be apprised what those Accusations are, which Separatists lodge against the Clergy of the Church of England; I have in the following Pages set them all down; and as the Reader will find Ignorance one grand Objection against the Clergy, I thought it not amiss to bestow a Page or two extraordinary upon it. And since, to declaim upon the Ignorance of the Clergy, is become such a popular and common Topick in the Mouth of every little Pretender to Learning, and pert Retailer of Wit, I wonder why more of the Clergy, even for their own Credit, won't be prevail'd upon to believe there is no Crime in Reading, nor any Absurdity for those Men, whose Office it is to instruct others, to lay in a little Fund of useful and sound Learning. By this Means, we should be able to discharge our Function with Reputation, and better qualified to answer the impious Cavils

of the Enemies to Religion; this wou'd soon confute that common Observation of the Country Parsons, viz. They have a little Learning when they first leave the Universities, but lose it again in a few Years. And if we did but know what a powerful Confederacy we have to encounter, what a mix'd Multitude of Socinians, Presbyterians, Independants, Quakers, Anabaptists, Antinomians, Meer-Moralists, Jesuits, Free-Thinkers, and Methodists, all which, and an infinite Tribe of nameless Sects, are haloo'd on by the Vicar of Jesus Christ and his Creatures, to tear (true Christian Charity) Christians to Pieces, and to make Sport for Infidels and Atheists; if we did but, I say, duly consider these Things, we should soon be convinc'd of the Necessity of learning, and that Study was not meerly a formal dull Exercise, fit only for heavy Bookish-Block-Heads, but absolutely requisite to "enable us to give an Answer to every Man that asketh us a Reason of the Hope that is in us, with Meekness and Fear," and to confute the Sophistry of the Enemies of Revelation.

There is one heavy Accusation against us, viz. the shameful Neglect of the Pastoral Care, which has so bad a Sound, and gives so much Offence to all sensible well-meaning People, that I must beg of those Clergymen, who are concern'd in this Accusation, to be so good as to clear themselves; and to excuse me for giving them up to the Dissenters to be treated as they deserve.

Some

P R E F A C E.

vii

Some Objections which I have set down in the following Pages, will very likely appear too trivial to deserve any formal Answer, they certainly are so, and the Reader will find, I have as such consider'd them; but however, let it be remember'd, that whatever is innocent, or indifferent in itself, ceases to be so when attended with any bad Consequence to ourselves or others. For the great Apostle's charitable Resolution, may be apply'd to every other Case as well as that of abstaining from Meats, and is well worthy our Imitation, in all our Conduct and Behaviour towards our weak and ignorant Brethren. For, tho' St. Paul was fully satisfy'd in his own Mind, that as 'an Idol was nothing in the World,' he might eat Flesh in the Idol's Temple without any Crime; yet because some weak Brother, might from thence be 'emboldned to eat it as a Thing offer'd to Idols,' he declares, that he will eat no Flesh while the World standeth, lest he should make his Brother to offend, 1 Cor. viii. 13.

As to the Performance of the following Treatise, I hope it will in some Sort come up to its Title as an Apology, being, I think, a full Confutation of the Separatists Accusations against the Clergy, consider'd as Pleas for Separation. I might indeed, with the utmost Justice and Truth, plead both great Want of Time and Abilities for any Performance of this Nature; but since those must needs be "sorry Excuses for a Man's Writing but indifferently, which are

very strong Reasons why he should not have written at all," I shall say not one Word more, either in behalf of myself, or this Performance; if a Book is well wrote (which I am far from having the Vanity to think this is) it stands in need of no Apology; if it is not, none will, or ought, to be admitted in it's Favour.





A N
A P O L O G Y
 FOR THE
C L E R G Y;

In a LETTER to a Gentleman of Fortune, &c.

THE
I N T R O D U C T I O N.

S I R,



WHEN I first heard the unwelcome News of your having commenced one of Mr. *Whitefield's* Disciples, I look'd upon it as an ill-natur'd Report, industriously rais'd to asperse your Character; neither cou'd I give Credit to it, without injuring

ing that Friendship and Correspondence, with which you had so long honour'd me, thereby contributing (according to your own Motto *utile dulci*) not a little to my Pleasure, and Advantage; and it was on Account of this Report of your being turn'd Methodist, that I gave you the Trouble of a Letter when you was in Town last *November*; letting you understand, that I had heard it confidently affirm'd by all your old Friends and Acquaintance; but that I could not possibly believe it, without calling that Gentleman's Judgment in Question; whose Depth of Reasoning, and Quickness of Discernment, had as often made him the Subject of Envy, as of Admiration; besides, as I had heard not a Word about Mr. *W——d* in this Part of the World for so long a Time, I was willing to hope that hot Spirit of Enthusiasm, which had once liked to inflam'd the Nation, wou'd at length have cool'd and subsided of itself; nor little did I think, Sir, when you and I went to hear him harangue the Populace near * *Barnet*, that you wou'd ever become a Convert to a Man, whom you look'd upon as a dangerous Impostor, &c. and wonder'd why the Government did not punish him as an Incendiary, and Disturber of the Peace of the Nation. To which, if you remember, I answer'd, that the best Way would be to let him alone, and to follow that wise Determination of the learned

* In *Hertfordshire*.

Jewish Doctor, Acts v. 38, 39. If this Counsel, or this Work, be of Men, it will come to naught; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God. But how was I amaz'd, Sir, when I found you, had infallibly concluded this Counsel of Mr. W——d, to be from Heaven, and that you had implicitly pinn'd your Salvation upon that Man's Sleeve, whom not long since you took for a dangerous Impostor, &c. For in your Letter of *December, 1744.* you frankly own the Charge of Methodism, and but too evidently convince me of this melancholy Truth, by glorying in your new Opinion, and confidently boasting you never knew what that true Faith was which was once deliver'd to the Saints, till your happy † Conversion to Methodism; and what further heightned my Astonishment, was that black List of Accusations against the establish'd Clergy, "which you declare frightned you from the Community of the Church of *England*, and forc'd you to look out for Salvation from some other Quarter." And as I perused your Letter a little lower, I found you had not only quarrell'd with the Clergy, but with all those who "are still blindly attach'd to their Interest and Doctrines;" and when I came to understand, that in Consequence of this peevish Humour, you had taken up an odd Resolution to erect a Monastery in a Protestant Country, by con-

† In Feb. 1743.

verting

verting that good old House into a recluse Hermitage, which had for so many Generations, to the Honour of its Owners, been justly renown'd for generous Hospitality, and Freedom of Access to all Persons of Worth, or Objects of Necessity ; when I was told that none were admitted to your solemn Cave, but such as had these Words (and in your own Characters) Methodism, New-Birth, Election, &c. stamp'd in their Foreheads, I then utterly despair'd of being suffer'd to approach your awful Cell. And for this Reason, Sir, I have taken the Liberty of this Address, by way of Answer, to those many and heavy Accusations against the Clergy of the Church of *England*, which you seem to have been at great Pains to muster together from all Quarters.

But I must beg Leave, Sir, before I enter upon your Objections, to range them into a little Order ; for I find your present exalted Faith, makes you disdain to write in that low abject Style, which other People, for the Sake of Method, are obliged to submit to. Your Objections then against the Clergy, may be reduced as follows : The first are such as relate to the Clergy themselves, the second, such as relate to their Doctrines. As to those which relate to the Clergy, I will take them as they are set down in your own List ; and, I confess, you have given in such a long and black Catalogue, as would make one think you had never known any of this Profession, but such as are
confessedly

confessedly it's Scandal and eternal Reproach. Your first Objection then, which I fear proceeds from a Spirit of Envy, is against the Right Reverend the Bishops, whom you accuse (with how much Decency I leave yourself to be Judge) of "shameful Indolence, and Neglect" in that High-Trust committed to their Care." But here, Sir, give me Leave to ask what you mean by Neglect? Wou'd you have the Bishops visit each Corner of their Diocess, tho' never so extensive, every Year? Or, are you offended (which seems to be the Case) because the Bishops don't perform the Duty of private Clergy-men, by constantly reading publick Prayers, and Preaching every Sunday? Surely, there is some Indulgence due to their Years; or, at least, to the great Dignity of their Function; have they not other Duties, that more immediately concern them as Bishops, besides Preaching, which of all sacred Offices, is confessedly the least? And tho' St. Paul tells *Timothy*, that it behoves a Bishop amongst other Things, to be || διδασκῆλον, one who is able to teach; yet, the Apostle does not tye a Bishop down to the Office of Preaching; this would be to the great Hinderance of his other Episcopal Labours, such as inquiring into the State and Discipline of the Church, the Lives and Manners of his Clergy, *sectifying* their Disorders, redressing their Grievances, encouraging the Sober and Diligent, and ad-

|| First Epist. *Tim.* Chap. iii. ver. 2.

monishing

monishing those that are careless and remiss in their respective Cures ; examining and approving Candidates for Holy-Orders ; sending fit and able Ministers into the Church ; administering of the Sacrament, laying on of Hands, &c. these, Sir, and such like Duties are the great and momentous Employments of the Bishops, who, as their * Name imports, are not only appointed as Labourers in the Vineyard, but as Overseers in the Church, and vigilant Pastors of the Flock of Christ : So that your Complaint against this highest Order of our Church, on Account of the Bishops not performing the Duty of private Clergymen, is not only in itself trifling, but seems to proceed from Envy and Pique, rather than from any real Ground of Complaint. Or, supposing there may be some amongst this venerable Order of Men, who don't discharge their High-Calling as they ought to do ; yet, is this any Reason why those vigilant and faithful Stewards of God's Household, must be promiscuously treated with Rudeness and Contempt ? Consider, Sir, for the Sake of good Manners, that it is a very ungenerous Thing to accuse any Body of Men upon the single Account of some one, or more, whose Conduct may not be altogether blameless. Tho' one may have incur'd your Displeasure, is that any Reason why you must fall foul upon all ? I fear Sir, your new Religion has quite eras'd that of Christ and his

* *Ἐπίσκοπος*, Inspector, vel Præses.

Apostles out of your Memory; otherwise you would have call'd to Mind, that our Saviour was an utter Enemy to all scurrilous and opprobrious Language; and that when he was reviled himself, he reviled not again. And St. *Paul*, tho' a Man of undaunted Courage, yet he was sorry for having used the *Jewish* High-Priest with indecent Language; he had the good Sense to own his Fault, and tho' he was provok'd to call the High-Priest, *Whited Wall*; still he acknowledges himself in an Error for transgressing that divine Command, *Exod. xxii. 28. Thou shalt not speak evil of the Ruler of thy People.* But perhaps, Sir, it would be an Infringement of your Privilege, to deny you the Pleasure of Calumny, and to expect, that as a Sectary, you should speak well of any, but those of your own Perswasion; and as far as I can learn, your great Ring-Leader, and his Followers, hold this notable Prerogative of Scandal by a very ancient Tenure, which they claim in right of being descended from that hopeful Race of Men mention'd by St. *Jude*, and distinguished by their dreadless Courage, in boldly daring to despise Dominions, and speak evil of Dignities. But please to remember Sir, this is a Liberty of Speech, which one of the best and greatest of created Beings did not dare to take, even with the Worst: For tho' it is not unlikely, but the Archangel met with Provocation enough, in that hot Dispute about the Body of the great *Jewish* Law-Giver, yet all that

I

that he replies to the incentive and opprobrious Language of his foul-mouth'd Adversary, is no more than this, *The Lord rebuke thee: St. Jude* ver. 9. So, Sir, admitting your Objection against the Bishops, with all its Force and Rancour, it is no manner of Excuse for treating them with such indecent and reproachful Language, neither does it amount to any more than this, that amongst this high Order of our Church, all are not alike watchful and diligent in their Profession; but whether this will warrant you, or any other Man for taking such unbecoming Freedoms of Speech, much less for making it a perverse Handle for Separation, I submit to your cooler Judgment. And as I have taken upon me out of Duty to my ecclesiastical Governors, to shew the Weakness of this Objection (consider'd as a Plea for Separation) against this much envy'd Order of our Church; I will next consider those heavy Accusations, which you muster up against the Clergy in general.

The first Thing, which you profess gives you the greatest Dislike to this Order of Men, is their Pride; which Objection, I suppose, you borrow'd from Mr. *Eachard*. Now I readily grant, that as Insolence and Pride are disagreeable and odious in every Man, so in a Clergyman, they are unpardonable; Pride is quite foreign to the genuine Character of a Minister of the humble and crucify'd Jesus, and as I am far from being an Advocate for Pride
in

in any Habit, so I am of Opinion, that under a Gown and Cassock, it is absolutely indefensible; neither am I (as you seem to think) "so narrowly attach'd to my own Profession, as to maintain stiffly every Thing must be right, which has the Sanction of the Clergy": No, Sir, I am entirely of your Opinion with regard to Pride, that it makes a Clergyman a very Monster; because whatever is so much out of Character, must of Necessity be monstrous and unseemly. But then, good Sir, please to consider, whether that which often passes for Pride in a Clergyman, is not rather a prudent Distance of Behaviour, which upon some Occasions, he must either put on, or meanly descend beneath his Character as a Clergyman.

How often is the Parson look'd upon as a proud formal Prig, because he won't eccho to the vociferous Oaths of a Country Fox-Hunter? Does not the rustick 'Squire think he has a Right to cut his low Jokes, and to fling a profane Sneer at Religion at third or fourth Hand, and then to laugh at the Parson for being a stiff pragmatrical Fellow, if he won't commend his impious Dullness, and applaud the far-fetch'd Impiety? And if a Clergyman, falls into the Company of such bright Gentlemen as these, who because they have more Money, infallibly conclude they must have more Sense than the Parson, and know their Duty better than he can tell them; and there-

B

fore,

fore, to give a Specimen of their Knowledge, they will swear profanely, and talk as Atheistically as they know how, and then maintain, with as much Ignorance, as Assurance, that there is no Harm in all this; in this Case what must he do? He must either take upon him that most unwelcome Task of publick Re-proof, or by his Silence give up that Cause, which it is his Duty, as a Clergyman, to defend, and his Interest, as a Man, to believe and support. If he does the first, he is condemn'd for being rude and unmannerly; if the last, his Conscience will upbraid him of Cowardice and Treachery, for tamely submitting to hear that worthy Name ridicul'd and blasphem'd, by which he is called. So that when the Gentlemen of the Laity accuse the Clergy of Pride, for publickly standing up in Defence of God and his Laws, they wou'd do well to consider who it is that lays us under this unwilling Restraint; and whether a Gentleman, who talks loosely and profanely, is not more to blame, than the Man, who modestly reproves him. For, as to this Charge of Pride in the Clergy, because they wont chime in with all Sorts of Company, nor by their Silence countenance and sooth Men in Vice and Infidelity, it is so far from being an Objection against this Order of Men with any one, unless a meer Libertine, that it greatly tends to their Reputation and Honour. But you will very probably say, you don't tax the Clergy with Pride upon the Account of
this

this laudable Boldness, in standing up in Defence of God, and his Laws ; but because they “ manifest (as you affirm) great Pride and Haughtiness upon other Occasions.” It is possible some of them, who know no better, may do so, more is the Pity ; but remember, Sir, that what sometimes passes for Pride, is no more than the natural Shyness and Reservedness of a Man’s Temper ; in a Lay-Habit this would be construed Modesty, or Bashfulness, then why shou’d it change its Name for being clad in a gown and Cassock ? Or why must that be condemned for a Crime in one Man, which in another is call’d a Misfortune only ?

Your next Objection against the Clergy, is on Account of their Ignorance, which Objection, I suppose, you pick’d up out of the same Author (Mr. *Eachard*) above mentioned.

Now, Sir, if you can make out this Charge against the Clergy, if you can shew them to be “ a Set of ignorant illiterate Wretches,” I will readily grant you did mighty well to look out for better Guides somewhere else ; for it must be own’d, that Want of Learning in a Teacher, is a great Impropriety ; and Ignorance in a Man whose Office it is to instruct, is a downright Solecism. But when I hear a Sectary complain of Want of Learning ; and pretend to make Ignorance in the establish’d Clergy, an Handle for Separation ; when I hear a Person call out for Literature and Science, who is at the same

time gone over to a Set of deluded Bigots, that lay it down as a standing Rule, the more Knowledge the less Goodness, and confidently maintain that human Learning is quite incompatible with divine Grace, I am at a Loss whether I should laugh at the Absurdity, or pity the Delusion. Had this Objection been brought by those Men, who are so passionately fond of acquir'd Knowledge, as to cry up human Learning in Disparagement of Revelation itself; had a modern Free-thinker, whose low Talent consists in ridiculing the Clergy, and roundly maintaining with a late bold Author, that the * Religion they teach "is not founded in Argument;" Had, I say, one of these self-sufficient Gentlemen insisted upon it, that he knew his Duty better than an ignorant Parson could teach him;— I should not at all have been surpriz'd at the Matter; but to hear a Gentleman complain of Ignorance in the Clergy, and then commence Methodist for the Sake (as is pretended,) of having more learned Guides, is such a palpable Contradiction, that I have known the Time, Sir, when you would have blush'd at the Thoughts of it. So that let this Complaint of Ignorance in the Clergy, be true or false, yet a Disciple of Mr. *W*——d is the very last Person, that should have mention'd it. But since, to declaim upon the Ignorance of the Clergy, is be-

* Christianity not founded in Argument.

come such a popular Topick amongst our Men of great Wit and little Learning, I will beg Leave, Sir, to bestow a Page or two in Answer to this Objection, of Ignorance in the establish'd Clergy, an Objection as notoriously false of most of the Clergy, as it may possibly be true of some few. And for the Truth of this Assertion, I need only appeal to a few of those numberless and learned Works of this Body of Men. Is it not owing to the learned Labours of a * Clergyman, that we can decypher the Antiquities of *Greece*, and unravel the mysterious History of those great Masters of Science, the old *Athenians*? Is it not to a † Clergyman, that we are beholden for that coherent and rational Body of Divinity? Is it not to the masterly Pen of another ‡ Clergyman, that we owe the Divine Legation of *Moses*, a Treatise, which, however liable it may be to Exceptions in some particular Points, is still universally allow'd to be a Work of Learning and extensive Knowledge.

And to these eminent Writers, I might add, (if the Time would allow me) great Numbers more of the Clergy, whose Writings would soon convince you, how groundless your Plea was for leaving the Establish'd Church, "on Account of the Ignorance of its Teachers." For it may be justly said, that it is to this Body of Men, that not Religion alone, but almost e-

* Dr. Potter, now Archbishop of Canterbury. † Stackhouse's Body of Divinity. ‡ Mr. Warburton.

very Art and Science owes such great and singular Improvements; and as this is a Truth too notoriously known to admit of any Debate, it would, in my humble Judgment, have betoken'd more Candour and Ingenuity, if you had been somewhat more sparing of your Invectives against the Clergy on Account of their "Incapacity in the Office of Preaching." But you seem to be offended, because every private Clergyman has not read as much as yourself, nor treasur'd up such Heaps of Learning, as would tempt me to think I might say, that truly of — which *Festus* said falsely of the Apostle. — *Thou art beside thyself, much Learning doth make thee mad.* Else, Sir, how can you imagine, that every Clergyman should be Master of such universal Knowledge, as you seem to expect from him, and not only equal, but excel yourself and other Lay-gentlemen who are studiously turn'd? For, in the first Place, Sir, consider what superior Advantages Gentlemen of large Fortunes, and no Profession, enjoy above the Clergy, in respect of Reading and Study: Secondly, Call to mind, that Clergymen have many Difficulties of Life to struggle with that you are utter Strangers to. And supposing a Gentleman and a Clergyman to have had the same Education, to be equal in respect of Parts, to enter upon the World together, stock'd alike with a Knowledge of Words and Things; yet unless the Gentleman is greatly wanting to himself,

self, he will soon get the better of the other, let him pursue his Studies ever so closely. For the Gentleman has nothing to interrupt him, no Avocations to break the Thread of his Enquiries; no Stops nor Difficulties in his Search of Knowledge, for want of proper Helps of Books and Authors; he has no anxious Thoughts about his Family, no Dread in his Mind, least he should leave to an uncharitable World, that unwelcome Legacy of a destitute Widow, or a Number of poor defenceless Orphans; —

Res angustæ Domi, (too often the Clergyman's hard Lot) he is unacquainted with, the Gentleman can make his Studies a Pleasure, and Reading a Recreation; he can unbend when he pleases, and by a judicious Variety of Exercise and Study, shake off the dull Remains of a sedentary Life, enliven the Faculties of Thinking, and then sit down to his Books with double Eagerness and Delight. But the Clergyman, on the contrary, has few or none of these Advantages; he is frequently turn'd out into the World, as soon as he has got his first Degree upon his Back, and perhaps oblig'd, for many Years, to live upon the small Pittance of twenty or thirty Pounds *per Ann.* and tho' his Stipend (to the eternal Infamy of all lazy Sine Cures, and unreasonable Monopolies of Church Preferment) is so small, yet very likely his Parish Duty may be large enough to engross his whole Time: Or if his weekly Parochial Duty requires but little of his At-

tendance; still whoever knows what belongs to composing, or will allow that a Clergyman either does or can make his own Sermons, is sensible, that he has Work enough upon his Hands to provide for his Parish every *Sunday*: and that let a Clergyman be never so studiously inclin'd, he neither has Leisure for Reading, nor those many and great Advantages of Improvement, which you, Sir, and other Gentlemen of large Fortunes, have in your own Power. And for these Reasons, Sir, I leave you to judge, whether you are not uncharitably severe upon the parochial Clergy, and for no other Reason, but because they can't read without Books, and study without Time. So that admitting this Charge of Ignorance in some of the Clergy to be true; yet would you but give yourself Time to consider, what Hardships the inferior Clergy labour under, how little Time some of them have for Reading, and others less Money to lay out in such Books, as are necessary to make a Man a tolerable Scholar; you could not, I am perswaded, be thus unreasonably offended at them, for that which is not so much their Fault, as their deplorable Misfortune. For it is well known, that many of the Clergy leave the Universities much too early, at a Time of Life, when they can't be suppos'd to have laid in any very great Fund of Learning. And with regard to classical Learning, it is very probable greater with some when they are admitted of the College, than when they leave it; and

and as to Science, or a Knowledge of Things, all that they can then pretend to know, is only a little Smattering of Ethicks, and a superficial Knowledge of the Mathematicks: and when one of these young Lads steps immediately out of the Soph's School, into a large populous Town, where the Care of Souls requires his constant Attendance, what Time can he have to make any extraordinary Progress in his Studies? Or if he is fix'd in a Country Village, where he has more Time to spare, yet it is ten to one but he labours under the worst of all Wants, that of useful and good Books. For tho' most large Towns are furnish'd with parochial Libraries, yet in the Generality of Country Villages, this most excellent Donation is still wanting. So that a Clergyman may both have Leisure and Inclination for Reading, but for want of proper Authors, be forc'd to stand still where he is; and soon finds that Observation, *Non progredi, est regredi*, true to his Sorrow. This is what I experienc'd myself for the first Year or two after I left *Cambridge*; and that I did not longer live amongst this Famine of Books, was owing to the generous Favour of *John Cotton*, Esq; who was pleas'd to give me Leave to have free Recourse to that well chosen Collection of Books in the Library belonging to the *Cotton* Family at *Steeple Girlding*, in the County of *Huntingdon*; and it is no more than a Debt of Gratitude (the first that should be paid) that I make

make this publick Acknowledgment of that worthy Gentleman's Favours. And, I think, Sir, from the Consideration of these Hardships, which Numbers of Clergymen labour under, you ought rather to pity than despise them on account of their Learning. But here it may not be amiss to observe, that there is no such absolute Necessity for every Country Clergyman, to be so deeply read as you would have him; a Man may be a good Parish Priest, that never read all the Fathers; and may preach very sound Doctrine, without having the Classics by Heart. What extraordinary Learning does it require for a Man to set a good Example to his Parish? May not a Clergyman perform all the Duties of his sacred Function, without being able to construe *Pindar*, &c.

A Clergyman may rightly and duly administer the Holy Sacraments, who has never read all that has been said for and against that unintelligible Doctrine of Transubstantiation. It is not Learning alone, but Piety and good Manners that compleats the Character of a Minister of Jesus Christ. An exemplary Life is the best Comment a Clergyman can give his Parishioners upon the Creed; and an honest well-regulated Behaviour, is a more forcible Recommendation of his Doctrine, than a thousand learned Quotations: His Conduct is a plain intelligible Language, which the poorest Scholar in his Parish may read, when perhaps not one in the Congregation (the Squire always excepted)

ed) can understand him, if he talks to them out of the common Stile of Instruction. For notwithstanding want of Learning in a Teacher is a great Impropriety; and Ignorance in him, whose Office it is to instruct others, a downright Solecism; yet a Clergyman may be able to teach the common People (and as to the rest of Mankind, they think they are wise enough already) their Duty to God, their Neighbours, and themselves, and still not be what you may call a Man of Letters; and, may I not say, a Man may be a Man of Letters, and still but a very indifferent Parish Priest?

There is a great deal more required to compleat the Character of a worthy Clergyman besides Learning alone; for, as a mere Scholar seldom makes the best of Companions, so neither does he always turn out the best of Pastors. Not, Sir, that a Clergyman is the worse Pastor for being, as the Schoolmen say, *Doctus, quâ Doctus*; no, Sir, quite the Reverse; a Man of Learning is undoubtedly the fittest Person to instruct the Ignorant, and to advise the Doubtful and Perplex'd: Were I to say otherwise, I should give into that ridiculous Opinion, "The more Knowledge, the less Goodness, &c." But then the Reason, Sir, as I take it, why Men of the greatest Learning do not always make the best Parish Priests, is owing to that Stiffness and Morosity, which always clings to a Man who studies nothing but Books; to the great Neglect of that more noble, and far more necessary Science, a Knowledge

ledge of Men and Things. For I know it by Experience, that unless a Clergyman now and then reads his Parish, as well as his Bible; and, like a skilful Physician, studies to find out the Cause of every dangerous Malady amongst his Flock, he will be greatly at a Loss what Remedies to apply; his Discourses may be what the common People call deep and learned, because they don't understand them; but it will be merely accidental, if they are either useful to the Rich, or adapted to the Capacities of the Poor. But to return to your Accusation of Ignorance in the Clergy, "from whose Lectures you profess you can't reap the least Benefit". Now if by not reaping Benefit you mean, that you are not one Jot the better for what you hear, this may be very true. But what is the Reason of this unfruitful Hearing the Word of God? Is it so much owing to the Dullness of these Discourses, as to some other extrinsical Cause? Sometimes Prejudice will make a Man deaf to the most cogent Truths, and hinder him from receiving Benefit from the best Sermon that ever was deliver'd by Man; nothing can make any lasting Impression upon a Mind that is always wavering and unfix'd. And we find by our Saviour's Explanation of that notable Parable of the Sower, that there are a great many fatal Hindrances to the Duty of Hearing, and that the Word of eternal Life (tho' powerful in itself to the dividing asunder of Soul and Body, &c.) enter'd the

the Ears but of one fourth Part of those that heard it, so as to be heard to any real Profit and Advantage. From whence it appears, Sir, that a Man may not possibly receive any Benefit from what he hears, and still it may be no kind of Objection against the Doctrine itself. And as to your saying, the Clergy tell you nothing but what you knew before, this also may be very true; but though it is your great Felicity to know your Duty so well, yet there may be some in your Parish, who are not bless'd with so great a Share of Knowledge; and though it would be little less than Treason for the Parson to pretend to know more than the Lord of the Manour; and an unpardonable Piece of Presumption to take upon him to instruct his Betters; though it would be a vain Attempt to hold out the Honey-comb to the full Soul, or to think of instructing one, that is already so full of Knowledge as to loath Instruction; yet surely, Sir, there are amongst your Tenants and Servants some, whom it would be no Crime in your Minister to teach and exhort. There are in all Parishes some that are ignorant in Matters of Religion; and as it is the chief End of Preaching to instruct, so methinks, Sir, you should not be offended at your Minister, for adapting his Discourses to the Capacities of his Hearers in general. For consider, Sir, upon what Account it is that you like a learned Sermon: Is it not because you understand it? And for the very same Reason,

son, the rest of the Congregation ought to have such Discourses as they can understand too: And with respect to the Bulk of Hearers, I know very well, a Clergyman cannot preach too plainly: And as I hope you will allow that your Tenants and Servants have a Right to the Care and Notice of the Minister, so it is his Duty to adapt and contrive his Discourses to the lowest Capacity; and to remember that one great End of Christ's Coming into the World was, that the Poor might have the Gospel preach'd unto them. If then a Clergyman's Business, as a Teacher and Guide, be chiefly amongst the lower Class of People, your Minister may be able to teach and instruct your poor Inhabitants, without being so mighty deeply read as yourself; and if Ignorance is the only Objection you have against your Minister, it is in your Power, Sir, to be greatly serviceable to this weak Pillar of the Church: And had you the Good of Religion as much at Heart as you pretend, your Superior Knowledge in divine Matters would make it an easy Task to assist your ignorant Clerk with your wholesome Counsel and Advice; neither, Sir, is it at all foreign to the Character of a Christian, to impart Knowledge to one that so much stands in Need of Instruction: And when I call to mind how ready and willing you are upon all other Occasions to communicate your Counsel and Instruction; I can't help concluding, but you have quarrell'd with your Minister upon

on some other Account than his want of Learning ; and that your Separation from the Establish'd Church, was not owing to an ignorant, but to some artful and subtle Priest.

o Your next Objection against the Clergy, is on Account of their quarrelsome and litigious Tempers: You accuse them for commencing vexatious Law-suits with their Parishioners about mere Trifles, such, as you say, are not worth contending for. Now Sir, you wou'd do well to tell us what you call a vexatious Law-suit, and what you mean by Trifles. Sure you don't call that a vexatious Method, of a Clergyman's recovering his Right, which the Law allows to every other Member of the Common-wealth? And if a Clergyman at last endeavours to do himself Justice by Law, when all other Methods fail, I don't see why he must be stigmatiz'd for a litigious quarrelsome Fellow: And as to your calling the Thing in Dispute a mere Trifle, though it may appear so to you, whose Fortunes are easy and plentiful, yet very likely it may be a Tenth, or at least a twentieth Part of a Clergyman's whole Subsistence; and it is my Opinion (notwithstanding your present Indifference to the World) that if your Tenants were to lower your Estate, and to endeavour to defraud you of One or Two Hundred Pounds *per Annum*, (which Sum is no more to you than Five Pounds a Year to a poor Clergyman) you wou'd neither call it a Trifle, nor that a vexatious Method

thod of doing yourself Justice, which the Law has put in your Power. Therefore, Sir, please to put yourself in the Clergyman's Place, I mean in Imagination only, for God forbid you shou'd ever know, what it is to live upon a Vicarage of sixty or seventy Pounds *per Annum*, which Sum is very likely to be collected from three or four hundred People; do but, I say, make the Clergyman's Case your own, and then I am perswaded you wou'd not call him litigious, for endeavouring to right himself by Law, when all other amicable Methods of Patience and Forbearance prove ineffectual: When all other Methods prove ineffectual I put it, because it must be own'd going to Law with a Man's Parish, ought to be the very last Remedy; not only upon Account of the Expensiveness of the Remedy itself, but the Interest of Religion, and the Peace and Satisfaction of a Man's own Bosom. But as it frequently so falls out, that a Man must either go to Law with some Sorts of People, or else give up his Right; in this Case what must a Clergyman do? Why, say you, the Clergy ought to live upon the voluntary Subscriptions of their Parishioners; and that as to their Tythes, they are not due *jure Divino*, but only by the Free-will and Consent of the People. Now allowing (*Grat. Disp.*) that the Divine Right of Tythes is a Point not determin'd; yet you cannot but know, that Tythes are due of common Right, and that
 both by

by the Laws of this Realm, the Parson has the same Right and Title to his tenth Part, as the Owners, or Occupiers have to the other Nine; and would you not be very loth, Sir, to give the Tithes of *H—d* and *W—n* (where you are Impropriator) into the Hands of the Farmers? Wou'd you not think it hard to keep your Parsonage-Houses in Repair, and to pay Taxes and other Incumbrances, and after all, to be defrauded of your just Demands? I can't help thinking, Sir, but you would resent the Injury, and think yourself oblig'd, in Point of common Prudence, to look after your lawful Rights. Then why should a Clergyman, who has nothing but his spiritual Preferment, who is (for very wise Reasons) restrain'd from following any secular Employments, give up that Right to his Tithes, which are as much his for Life as *H—d* and *W—n* Tithes are yours? For as to your voluntary Contributions, Sir, they are as uncertain and precarious as the Tempers of those who pay them; and I have heard the Dissenting Teachers complain of this Method of subsisting, as the greatest and most deplorable Hardship: it undoubtedly is so: Nor can I conceive a more pitiable Condition, than for a Man to owe every Morsel of Bread he eats, to the Wantonness and Caprice of another. To be dependent at all, is no very desirable State; but to be dependent upon the Smiles of those Men, whose Bounty, like their Religion, is ever wavering and uncertain, is of all Con-

ditions of Life, the very last & wise Man would willingly submit to. I know the Dissenters Plea for taking this Method is, (as they pretend) to tye their Teachers down to their good Behaviour ; concluding, that so long as they are kept dependent upon the People, so long they will study to please them. But if the Dissenters would seriously weigh this Matter over, they would soon be sensible what Temptations they lay their Teachers under to deceive, and how liable they themselves are by this Means to be deceiv'd by them. For if the good Behaviour of their Teachers be not upon Principle, but purely to gain the Esteem of the People, it stands upon too tottering and rotten a Foundation to be durable and lasting ; neither can the Dissenters expect their Teachers will be so over solicitous how to preach sound Doctrine, as such which they think will suit the Palate of their Hearers ; for since they have nothing to depend upon but the Bounty of the People, it is probable their Study will not be so much how to instruct, as to please them ; not to promote the eternal Welfare of others, so much as to advance their own private Ends, and rather than offend a Man, that may be even with them next Quarter-Day, they will pass those Vices over in Silence, which it is their Duty, as Teachers, to reprove, with becoming Boldness, as well as godly Sincerity. I don't say, that this is actually the Case ; but does not this absolute Dependence upon the Bounty of the People,

People, lay their Guides under a Kind of Restraint, to sooth their Hearers in their Failings, instead of ingenuously telling them their Faults and frankly reproving their Vices? May not these Men, thus wholly dependent, be actually afraid to speak the Truth, lest it should give Umbrage to some of the Audience, and be afterwards remember'd to their Disadvantage? And I appeal to yourself, Sir, whether the Dissenters by this arbitrary Usage of their Teachers, don't act in Imitation of that obstinate Race of Men, * who said to the Seers, *See not, and to the Prophets, prophesy not unto us right Things; speak unto us smooth Things, prophesy Deceits.* For when a Teacher either stands in Awe of the People, or finds it his Interest to deceive them; it is not much to be wonder'd at, if now and then he does so; and the Dissenters may thank themselves for it, if they are so often sooth'd in their Errors, and flatter'd with those heavenly Titles, the Elect of the Lord, and Vessels chosen unto Salvation so long, till at length they verily believe they are so. And from hence it appears, that notwithstanding your voluntary Contributions may be some Kind of Restraint upon the outward Behaviour of your Teachers, yet it makes but very little for their inward Sincerity; they may indeed please the Humours of the People, and impose upon the Ignorant and Unwary, but remember, Sir, it is one Thing to please Mens Fancies,

* *Isaiah* xxx. 10.

and another to inform their Judgment ; and I have known a Preacher please his Congregation, better than a Man that had ten Times his Sense and Learning. That Man is sure to take the most, as a Preacher, who genteely passes over the Vices of his Audience, and gives Men a cool unmeaning Lecture of Virtue and Vice in general ; whereas the Man who hath Courage to speak the Truth, and is not afraid to reprove the Sins of Mankind without any Respect of Persons, is seldom esteem'd a good Preacher in this mannerly Age, when it is look'd upon (even by some of our own † Clergy) to be a very rude Affront to any polite Audience, to tell Men of their Faults, or so much as to mention these harsh and dreadful sounding Words, Hell, Damnation, Devil, without a canting Paraphrase, or a formal Apology. And if your voluntary Contributions serve to no better End, but to tempt your Teachers to invent smooth Doctrines, and to speak Words of Peace where there is no Peace to be found ; I would submit it to the serious Deliberation of our Sectaries, whether they would not be better secur'd from Error and Delusion, if their Teachers had a certain independent Annual Stipend, instead of those precarious Offerings, which (unless I have been greatly misinform'd by their own Teachers) are sure to sink and dwindle in a Year or two's Time, let their Teachers behave ever so well : So inseparable is

† Dr. ———, Mr. B———d.

the

the Madness after new Teachers, from a Mind that hunts after new-fangled Doctrines. And I don't know Sir, of any Bar against this fix'd independent Salary for the Clergy, unless that stale Objection; " That a Clergyman is no
 " sooner inducted into a good fat Living, but
 " he grows careless and negligent in his Office,
 " and because he knows he has so much fix'd
 " for Life, he is not at all solicitous about
 " what his Parish says, or thinks of him, or
 " his Labours." This possibly may be the Case with some disingenuous Minds; but what, in the Name of Common-Sense, is there so well contriv'd as not to admit of Abuses? What Laws can human Wisdom devise so unexceptionable and perfect, as not to be attended with some Inconveniences, which Inconveniences are still no Objection against the Utility of those Laws in general? And if out of two Evils, the Church of *England* has chosen the least, can you blame her for her Prudence? Why would you have the whole Body of the Clergy give up their Rights, and fling themselves upon the Parish for Bread, because there may be here and there an indolent sottish Parson, who takes no further Care about his Parish than to demand his Tithes? This would be to introduce a Spirit of Tyranny and Popery into the Nation with a Witness; only with this Difference, that as the Roman Clergy are Tyrants (where they can) over the People; the People, in this Case, would be all Tyrants

over the Clergy; both which are equally to be detested and abhorr'd: For as no Clergyman has a Right to be Lord over another Man's Conscience, neither ought he, I think, to be any Man's Vassal, or Slave; the one would be usurping a Dominion which Christ Jesus never design'd him, the other would be debasing the Dignity of his Office, and making his sacred Function too cheap and contemptible. And from this short Digression, I think, it appears that the voluntary Contributions of the People are not only in themselves uncertain and precarious, but likewise attended with such unhappy Circumstances, as are neither for the real Good of the People, nor the Interest of Religion. Religion, Sir, is (or ought to be) a very fix'd and steady Principle, and so should the Means to support it be fix'd, and steady too; and since the Laws of the Realm have wisely provided the establish'd Clergy with a fix'd independent Provision, and given to them as just a Title to the Rents and Profits of their Free-hold, as to any other Subject, I don't see why a Clergyman, who takes all proper Care of his Parish, ought to be depriv'd of his Tithes, any more than a Lay-Gentleman of his Rents; or why the Parson should be call'd litigious for suing for his Rights, any more than another for suing for his just Debts; Property in both Cases is the same; and is a Man to be kept out of his Property merely for being a Clergyman? This is contrary to both the Laws of God and Men.

Human

Human Laws have given the establish'd Clergy a just Right to their Tithes, and when that Right is with-held, a Power of suing for them; and by divine Command, *we are forbidden to muzzle the Ox when he treadeth out the Corn,* Deut. xxv. 4. and to the *Jewish*, our great Law-giver agrees declaring, *that the Labourer is worthy of his Hire,* Luke x. 7.

And yet, notwithstanding the Clergy have such a just and indisputable Right to their Tithes, still to my certain Knowledge there are several People, who (in downright Contradiction to the Decrees of God, and the Laws of Justice and Honesty) make a constant Practice to defraud the Parson, and by some strange Infatuation, think there is no Manner of Harm in secreting their Tithes, tho' they perhaps would scruple to use any Acts of Fraud and Dishonesty towards another. This, Sir, I know to be Matter of Fact, not only amongst the People call'd Quakers, and some others who pretend to do it upon Principle; but even amongst those of our own Community: And therefore, if a Clergyman is forc'd against his Inclination to have Recourse to the Law; it is very ungenerous to brand him with these ignominious Epithets, quarrelsome, litigious, &c. and for no other Reason but because he can't, Camelion-like, feed up^d Air, and peaceably submit to starve himself and Family to Death. I would not be thought from this Vindication of my Brethren the Clergy, to be a Promoter of

Strife and Contention between the Clergy and the People, God forbid, for there is nothing makes a Clergyman so odious to his Parish, and to all Men of Sense and Goodness, as a litigious Law-itching Mind; and I have seen so much of the melancholy Effects of Clergymen's going to Law with their Parishioners in two different Places where I have liv'd, that I greatly fear it has in both Parishes created such unchristian Heart-burnings, such riveted Animosities, and irreconcilable Disputes, as will hardly be forgot till another Generation. But when it so unfortunately falls out, that a Clergyman can no Ways avoid going to Law without giving up his own and another's Right, why must it be call'd litigious in him, which in another Man is look'd upon as a prudent and equitable Method of doing himself Justice? And had you known, Sir, what various Tempers of Men the Clergy have to deal with; how ready some Men are to take Advantage of a peaceable Temper, and to trample upon a Man of a yielding and quiet Disposition, you would never have brought this last Accusation against the Clergy in general; in general, I say, because it is not improbable but there may be some who deserve the Character you have given them; and I dare answer for it, you have the free Consent of the rest of the Clergy to treat these turbulent litigious Spirits as they deserve. But then, Sir, is it fair to condemn all for the Faults of a few? For tho' there is such a Figure in
 Rhetorick

Rhetorick as to include the Whole in a Part, yet when apply'd to the Actions of Men, this Method of arguing is as illogical, as it is uncharitable, and neither bespeaks the Scholar, nor the Gentleman.

The next Charge against the Clergy, is their Neglect of the Pastoral-Care; and were this Neglect as universal as you affirm it to be, it would be a heavier Accusation against the Clergy, than all the rest put together. For it cannot be deny'd, but a Pastor who takes no Care of his Flock, is a most infamous Scandal to Religion, and may be justly styl'd in the Words of our Saviour, — *an Hireling and not the Shepherd*. But even granting this Accusation in Part true, and that there are “Numbers of the Clergy, who take no Care to feed, but (thank you for this elegant Quibble) to fleece the Flock, yet, will this Neglect of the Pastoral-Care be found a sufficient Reason for leaving the Church of *England*? There is certainly so much due to the establish'd Religion of one's Country, that no Man ought to depart from it without stronger Reasons for so doing than any you have yet produc'd; and unless you can prove that there is something either sinful, or ridiculous in the Rites and Ceremonies of the establish'd Church, you are guilty of no common Sin in being the Author of Schism. An indolent careless Clergyman, may very justly provoke your Indignation against the Man, but it will never excuse you, for breaking the Unity
of

of that spiritual Body, for the Preservation whereof, our Saviour so ardently prays to God the Father, begging of him to give, not to his Disciples alone, but to all that should afterwards believe on Him through their Word, such a Spirit of Unity and brotherly Love, that they all, says he, *may be one as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us*, John xvii. 20, 21. And from this delightful Harmony amongst Christians, our Saviour concludes, the World would infer his Divine Mission, latter Part of *ver. 21.* — *that the World may believe that thou hast sent me :* and it is well known, that Christ makes brotherly Love such an indisputable and manifest Badge of being his Disciples, that by this all Men would be able to distinguish them from others. Therefore, Sir, I would recommend it to all those People, who separate from the Church of *England*, and forsake her Doctrines, out of Prejudice to her Teachers, and a Love of Singularity, to consider seriously within themselves the Heinousness of Schism, to call to Mind what they are a doing, and how abominable those Men must needs appear in the Sight of God, who mangle and tear in Pieces the Mystical Body of his Son Jesus Christ, by miserably dividing that Unity, which is the very Essence of Christianity, and the Bond of all Peace; but as I may take Occasion to shew the Heinousness of Schism in some other Place, I shall wave saying any Thing further at present; and

and only beg leave to ask you one Question or two ; Did you actually separate from the establish'd Church, upon Principle ? Did you verily believe Salvation was not to be had in the Community of our Church ? If this, Sir, was your Opinion, you did very wisely to fly from us as fast as you could ; and it would be a singular Favour, to instruct us wherein our Church is so wofully fall'n from her primitive Purity, as now to make it absolutely impossible to be safe under her Banner. Neither, Sir, will it be of a Piece with your wonted Love and Benevolence to Mankind, to suffer so many thousand Souls to live and die in damnable Errors. But since none of our Dissenting Brethren have ever been so good as to let us into this momentous Secret, I fear, Sir, their Separation, as well as yours, was not so much upon Principle, as out of Prejudice and Pique ; neither, as I am apt to think, was it owing to the Neglect of the Pastoral Care, but to a Love of Change, and an itching Fondness for Novel-Doctrines. However, I will allow that your Separation might be owing to the Neglect of the Pastoral-Care ; yet whether this (tho' to you a sufficient Reason) will acquit you before that Tribunal, where all your Actions will be thoroughly canvas'd, is what I dare not venture to affirm. For this Neglect of the Pastoral-Care so loudly complain'd of, either was in your own Parish, or it was not : If it had not yet crept into your own Church, then tho' it might give you, and all Well-wishers to Religion,

Religion, great Concern to hear of it; yet it could not immediately effect you, or hazard your future Salvation: Or supposing your own Minister had been one of those "lazy infamous Wretches," yet you knew very well either how to make him better, or to get him suspended. For had he been guilty of any notorious Neglect of Duty, you might have lodg'd a proper Complaint against him before his Diocesan; and I need not tell you, that our Bishops have a Power to admonish and suspend delinquent Clergymen; and if your Clerk had really deserv'd it, I make no Doubt but you might have had him remov'd, both *ex Officio* and *ex Beneficio*; nor would any Man of Sense have blam'd you for ridding the Church of a sottish idle Parson, to make room for some worthy Clergyman in his stead. This, Sir, in my Opinion you ought to have done, rather than to forsake the Community of that Church, in which you had liv'd for so many Years, even after you were able to judge for yourself. And I cannot help thinking, but your forsaking the Church of *England* at this Time a Day, leaves great room to suspect, that your Separation was not so much owing to the Neglect of our own Clergy, as to the Diligence and Cunning of those Men, who are always sculking in Ambush, * *προς την μεθοδείαν τῆς πλάνης*, and the Word *μεθοδεία*, is so expressive both in Sound and Signification of the Manners and Behaviour

* *Eph. iv. 14.*

of a certain Sect, that the World is greatly obliged to these Gentlemen for making it the Motte of their Standard. Therefore if the neglect of the Pastoral-Care be not a sufficient Reason for breaking the Unity of the Church ; I may fairly venture to say, your next Objection against the Clergy, is but a very sorry Plea for Separation ; for all that you have to say against the Clergy in your next Accusation, is only this, that “ they are a rude unmannerly Set of People.” Well, Sir, as this is no Impeachment of their moral Character, I will readily grant all that you infer from it ; and even allowing the Clergy to be as clownish and rude as you are pleas’d (in great Politeness of Language) to represent them, yet sure this could have no Hand in forcing you to leave the Church. May not a Clergyman preach sound Doctrine, who can’t make a graceful Bow, and perform his Parochial Duty very diligently, without having the Grimace of a *Frenchman*, or the conceited Gestures of a Dancing-Master ? I don’t see, what absolute Necessity there is, for every Clergyman to have the Politeness and Address of a *Sir Clement* ; or, why he may not be able to give good Advice, without being one of our Modern pretty-Fellows. Thus much, however, may be granted you, that if this Behaviour you complain of be affected, then indeed it becomes highly blameable ; for as an affected Clown is disagreeable in every Dress, so he is never more so than when

when under a great formal Bever; and I am so far from defending these Gentlemen in that clownish Stateliness, some of them put on, that, I think, of all Characters in the World, that are free from moral Turpitude, this is the very last any wise Man would chuse to affect; nor could I ever find out what those Men are driving at, who assume a clownish morose Behaviour, and then, by a strange Prostitution of Speech, call it Religion; who think, that in order to promote the Glory of God, they are obliged to put on a sullen Air to Men, and to carry it with as much Reservedness and Distance towards their Fellow-Creatures, as if it would most certainly profane the Holy Garment to approach near any but the Tribe of *Levi*. But since this clownish Behaviour, (as before observ'd) is no Impeachment of a Clergyman's moral Character, so neither can you bring it as any just Plea for leaving his Ministry; you may laugh at his awkward Manner of handling his Bever, and justly think yourself injur'd, if he won't uncover to the 'Squire; yet this is too weak an Argument in Defence of Separation, and too trivial an Objection to deserve any formal Answer; and for this Reason, I will proceed to your next Accusation of the Clergy (*viz.*) their scandalous and wicked Lives. This I must own is a melancholy Charge, and one would think you had liv'd in the Time of King *Henry* the 8th, and took a List of all the infamous and debauch'd Clergy of that Age from Lord Cromwell's

Cromwel's Journal. Now, Sir, that there are none amongst the present Clergy, who deserve the Character you have given them, I am as unable to say, as I am unwilling to believe it; but that there are many, I am verily persuaded is false. I have been, and am acquainted with several of my Brethren, but in all my Life-Time, I never knew one that deserv'd those shocking and reproachful Epithets, you are pleas'd in great Charity to affix to this Order of Men. I well remember the Time, Sir, when you disdain'd Slander, and abhorr'd to speak Evil of any Man without just Provocation, and good Grounds for so doing; nor can I attribute this unhappy Change of Temper, to any Thing but the Genius of your New Religion; for I find it is a standing Maxim with Dissenters of all Denominations, *Calumniare fortiter, & aliquid adhærebit*; rail courageously against the Church-Men, and something will stick too behind. Railing against the Clergy is a Subject, which takes so well with the Generality of People, that your Dissenting Teachers shew their Judgment in nothing so much, as in choosing this for their constant Topick; nor can they possibly find out a more cheap, and easy Way of setting up themselves, than by pulling down others. But call to Mind, Sir, that Scandal always reflects the foulest Stain upon it's Author; and to asperse any Man's Character, without sufficient Reason for so doing, is diametrically opposite to the Temper of that Religion

Religion, which forbids as to speak Evil of any Man; much less are we to wound the Reputation of others, with an ill-natur'd Design to establish our own upon its Ruins.

Well, but say you, " this however is certain, " that the immoral, and scandalous Lives of " the Clergy, are every where cry'd out against, " as giving Offence to all serious and thinking " People; and that the Clergy may thank themselves for having so many Dissenters in their " Parishes". That an infamous living Clergyman gives great Offence to all serious People cannot be deny'd; but that his scandalous Life should make his Parishioners (especially those serious and thinking People who are suppos'd to have a better Sense of Things) separate from the Church, is a Conclusion not to be admitted. For if their own Minister is one of these debauch'd, and wicked living Clergymen, they may, and are oblig'd as such to present him; if by this Means he reforms, the Grievance is remov'd; if he continues obstinate and incorrigible, they may (as observ'd Page 44.) get him remov'd both *ex Officio* and *ex Beneficio*. Or, even supposing " his Interest with the " Bishop, so great, that his Parish cannot rout " him out of his Benefice," yet you know, Sir, that the Unworthiness of a Minister does not of itself hinder the Effects of his Preaching, or administering the Holy Sacraments; as is fully explain'd in the 26th Article, and since you pretend to be such a Friend to the 39 Articles

ticles of Religion, I hope you will more readily admit their Authority in the Point before us : The Words of the 26th Article run thus, “ Although in the visible Church the Evil be ever mingled with the Good, and sometime the Evil have chief Authority in the Ministration of the Word, and Sacraments ; yet forasmuch as they do not the same in their own Name, but in Christ’s, and do Minister by his Commission and Authority, we may use their Ministry, both in hearing the Word of God, and in receiving of the Sacraments : Neither is the Effect of Christ’s Ordinance taken away by their Wickedness, nor the Grace of God’s Gifts diminish’d from such, as by Faith, and rightly do receive the Sacraments administred unto them, which be effectual because of Christ’s Institution and Promise, although they be ministred by evil Men.” So that even supposing the worst, Sir, and that it is the dreadful Misfortune of a Parish to have a worthless infamous Clergyman pinn’d upon it for Life, still Men ought not to forsake the Church upon his Account ; his scandalous Life can’t indeed but give great Offence, and render him very odious to his Parishioners ; yet it will by no Means excuse them for dividing the Unity of the Church, and setting up a Conventicle in Opposition to the House of God.

But come, Sir, I will for once grant all that you can wish ; I will allow, that a wicked living Clergyman is enough to make not only
D some,

some, but all of his Parishioners turn Dissenters; but then, ought they not to return to the Church again as soon as it is supply'd by a sober diligent Man? They left the Church on Account of the scandalous Life of the Parson, but when that Cause is remov'd, their Objection falls to the Ground of itself. For the Dissenters Plea for Separation may be drawn up in these Words; I left the establish'd Church, because it was ill-supply'd, and that I might find out better Teachers somewhere else; *ergo*, when the Church is well supply'd (and that Church must have very hard Fate that never is) I ought to return to it's Community again; because the very same Reason which is given for leaving the establish'd Church, is the strongest that can possibly be devis'd for returning over to it again; for I may safely venture to affirm, without any Suspicion of Prejudice or Partiality, that there are as learned, and pious Pastors in the establish'd Church as the best of your Dissenting Teachers. Besides, Sir, give me Leave to ask upon what Account it is, that the Separatists not only forsake the Church but her Doctrines, and do every Man whatsoever is right in his own Eyes? Their quarrelling with the Clergy, is but a poor Excuse for quarrelling with the decent Rites and significant Ceremonies of the Church. It is one Thing to be offended at the Lives of the Clergy, and another to invent strange Doctrines; there is a wide Difference between barely leaving the Church, and opposing her Manner of

3

Worship,

Worship, and broaching such Tenets, as are not only contrary to the Church, but to the Doctrines of Christ and his Apostles. For notwithstanding the Government has indulg'd every Man the Liberty to worship God in his own Way, yet, it is Pity this Indulgence (comply'd with at first rather out of Necessity than Choice) should be wantonly abus'd; and that one wicked living Clergyman should not only be made a Pretence for leaving the establish'd Church, but from hence an Occasion took to set up new, and for so many Centuries unheard of Methods of publick Worship. For as to the scandalous Lives of the Clergy, if this be the real Cause of so many fatal Breaches in our Sion, then why should not the faithful and diligent Labours of a sober Clergyman, be instrumental in healing them up again? Why should an infamous Parson frighten the Dissenters from the Church, when perhapst en regular worthy Clergymen are not able to bring them back again? Is it not strange that one bad Man should do so much Harm, when others quite the Reverse can do so little Good? Is it not really amazing, that Men should be so forward to quarrel with, and so backward to be reconcil'd to their Ministers; that they should be so mighty quick-sighted to spy out his Failings, and so blind to his good Qualities; that every little Slip must be look'd upon as an unpardonable Sin, and every petty Offence magnified into a capital Crime? For it is well known if a Clergyman once does amiss, he is seldom forgiven;

and if there is but one drunken idle-headed Parson in a Neighbourhood, he is sure to be quoted upon all Occasions ; while those Clergymen are purposely overlook'd, who faithfully and conscientiously discharge their ministerial Function to the best of their Power and Abilities. What this uncommon Treatment of the Clergy can be owing to, is hard to guess : But so it really in Fact is ; and let a Clergyman behave as he will, he cannot help giving Offence ; if his Conduct be regular and discreet, one sort of Men esteem him the less for it, and either look upon him as a designing Hypocrite, or a dull formal Fellow, for troubling his Head about Regularity and Sobriety. And if, on the contrary, he is careless and negligent in his Duty, or guilty of the least Irregularities in any former Part of Life, this blasts all his future Endeavours, and ruins his Reputation for ever. And whether this, Sir, is treating the Clergy as our Fellow-Creatures, by being thus offended at them because God has not thought fit to make them Angels, but Men, must be submitted to the serious Reflection of your own Conscience, and how either that, or God, who best knows its Integrity, will acquit you for making the Failings of the Clergy, (from which they are no more exempt by the Course of Nature than the rest of Mankind) a Handle for Separation, is not mine but yours to determine.

I find, Sir, your next Complaint against the Clergy is, that “ they are a greedy, covetous,
“ and

“ and uncharitable Race of Mortals.” This Objection above all the rest convinces me, that when Men even of the greatest Candour and Humanity are once possess’d with that restless and turbulent Spirit of Slander, they never know when to give over. For I see you are resolv’d to quarrel with the Clergy at all Events, and to pick Holes in their Coats in spite of all their Caution. I find that notwithstanding the innumerable Hardships the inferior Clergy have to struggle with, how fond some Men are to oppress them, to catch at every Opportunity to beat down their Tithes, and to lessen and impoverish their Salaries ; yet if after all this, a Clergyman has not the Charity and Generosity of a Gentleman of a plentiful temporal Estate, he is immediately mark’d out for a covetous stingy Wretch, and one that hath no Bowels of Compassion towards his Fellow-Creatures. But when you accuse the Clergy of Covetousness, it is strange methinks you don’t produce one Reason for so heavy an Accusation ; you should either have shewn that they are more addicted to this Crime than other Men are, or else said nothing at all about it. And if you had consider’d the true State of the Clergy, the Nature of their Tenures, the additional Out-goings of First-Fruits, Tenths, Synodals and Procurations over and above their Lay-Neighbours, you could never have expected that a Clergyman should bestow as much in Acts of Charity, as a Gentleman of the same yearly Income ; and

an Income, not like the Clergyman's for Life only, but, in the Language of the Law, to him and his Heirs for ever. Neither, Sir, can it, in Prudence, be expected, that a Clergyman with a Family to provide for, and who has no other Dependance but his spiritual Preferment, should give away every Farthing of the Overplus of his Living, beside what is just barely necessary for his present Support. This would be to expose himself to the Censure of the Apostle, who affirms — *if any † provide not for his own, and especially those of his own House, he hath denied the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel.* And tho' a Clergyman who gives away all that the present Wants of his Family does not demand, may be call'd an Alms-giver, still it will not entitle him to the Character of a charitable Man; for Charity (says the Proverb) should always begin at Home, remembering at the same Time not to let it end there too. A Man's own Family has a Right in the first Place to be consider'd; and when that is done, there is Room for true Charity; true Charity, I say, because whatever a Man gives away when he knows the Circumstances of his Family will not allow it, is not Charity, but Ostentation and vain-glory; or at the best only thoughtless and misplac'd Bounty. Now I would not have you from hence conclude, that I am pleading in defence of a covetous and unalms-giving Temper, far be it from me, for on the con-

† 1 Tim. v. 8.

rrary, I think those Men can't be treated with too much Contempt and Severity, who, when they have it in their Power (and this is always suppos'd) won't cheerfully relieve the temporal, as well as spiritual Wants of Mankind; but like that rich and inhuman Wretch upbraided in the Gospel, turn their Backs upon their indigent Brethren, not suffering them so much as to glean the Waste and Refuse of their Houses, or to feed upon the Fragments which fall from their Tables. A Clergyman undoubtedly lies under manifold Obligations to this Duty of Charity, or more properly Alms-giving, as a Man, as a Christian, and as a Minister of the Gospel. I am oblig'd to relieve the distress'd and necessitous upon the Principles of natural Religion only, which is no more than doing unto others as I would wish, were I in the like calamitous Circumstances, others would do unto me; and as a Christian, I am positively commanded to do all the Good I am able to every Object in Distress; which Command I am oblig'd to observe, for the Sake of him who gave it me. And as a Minister of the Gospel, the Obligation rises still higher; a Clergyman is not only enjoin'd this Duty in common with other Christians, but oblig'd to greater Acts of Mercy and Compassion, and call'd upon to more eminent Degrees of Charity and Benevolence; he is more immediately concern'd in that Charge which Christ gave his Disciples, upon that notable and uncommon

Act of Condescension in washing their Feet, I have given you, says he, an Example that ye should do as I have done to you. And it is evident from the whole Tenor of the Gospel, that the Ministers of Jesus Christ lie under stronger Obligations to this, as well as to all other Christian Duties, than the rest of Mankind; they are expressly call'd upon to let their Light shine before Men, that they may see their good Works, and be wrought upon by the Excellency of their Lives (a far more persuasive Argument than meer speculative Doctrines) to add their Tribute of Glory to their common Father, which is in Heaven. So, Sir, were I to stand up in Defence of a niggardly Unalms-giving Clergyman, I should injure my Conscience, give my Saviour the Lie, and render myself odious in the Sight of God, by speaking Good of the Covetous, whom he abhorreth. But then, as to your calling the Clergy "a Pack of hard-hearted covetous Wretches," though it may possibly be true of some, who riot in Plenty, and fare sumptuously every Day; yet I dare venture to say, that amongst the Generality of private Clergymen, there is as much Charity at their Doors, as at the rich Man's Gates; as much I say; for if a Man gives what he can afford, tho' but a Cup of cold Water, it will be accepted by that gracious Being, who regards the Intention more than the Action, and will esteem it according to that a Man hath, and not according to that he

he hath not. And in Point of common Prudence, Respect is always to be had to the Situation and Abilities of the Giver ; for *Juvenal's* Remark may be as aptly apply'd in the Relief of our Brethren, as in the Entertainment of our Friends —

Atticus eximie si cœnat, lautus habetur :
Si Rutilus, Demens, Sat. XI.

And if the Clergy, Sir, don't think themselves oblig'd, either in Point of Prudence, or Religion, to give away what they have to the Ruin of their Families, it is Pity they should so highly merit your Displeasure upon this Account : But, for ought I know, several of those whom the World may call stingy and niggardly, least deserve these reproachful Epithets : I have known some Clergymen pass for narrow-soul'd covetous Wretches, and for no other Reason, but because their Circumstances oblig'd them, or their Inclinations dispos'd them to lead a private retir'd Life, tho' they seldom pass'd a Day without doing some secret Acts of Charity. And I can't help observing, Sir, how strongly most People are prejudic'd against the Clergy, what false Notions they have imbib'd of this Body of Men, how many ungenerous Things they surmise, and then draw Conclusions from these Surmises, as if they were Matters of Fact. For that you are so much offended at the Clergy for being, (as you may imagine) a Set of uncharitable covetous Men, can be owing to nothing

thing else but taking Things by the wrong End, and not considering the true State of the Clergy. It is well known, that when a Clergyman first enters upon his Living, it is always expected that he should live up to the reported Income of his Benefice, which is generally a Fourth, sometimes a Third less than the real Value; if he does not live up to the reported Value, he draws the common Cry of his Parish upon his Head, for a niggardly mean-spirited Wretch; if he does, he is sure in few Years to hurt his Fortunes; and pray, what does he get in Return for living to please the World instead of himself? Why, in a little Time he is in every Body's Mouth, because he is in every Body's Debt, grows contemptible in his Parish, is laugh'd at by his Enemies, pity'd by his Friends, upbraided by his poor Family, and (unless he has forgot to think) condemn'd by his own Bosom, every Day he lives, for his Extravagance and Folly. And, for ought I know, it is owing to Clergymen's setting out too fast at first, and stupidly affecting to live like People of Rank and Fortune, that we behold such melancholy Objects of poor starving Orphans, and helpless Widows, which are the sad Remains, and miserable Monuments of some Clergymens thoughtless Extravagance. Not but great Numbers of these moving Objects of Pity and Compassion, are the dreadful Effects of such a vast Quantity of small Livings, which are not Bread for a sober single Man, much less will

they

they allow, even with the most prudent Oeconomy, any Sort of future Provision for a Widow and Children. And I am willing to hope, when you come to consider these Things rightly, you will be a little more sparing in casting these Reflections of Covetousness, &c. upon a Body of Men, from whom no such extraordinary Bounty and Generosity can be expected. And, I own, I did not suspect to hear you accuse the Clergy so much on the Score of Covetousness, as for running into the other Extreme, and giving into that ridiculous Taste (for with Respect to private Clergymen it is the very Pinnacle of Madness) of a general Acquaintance, thereby not only injuring their Circumstances, but sacrificing one of the most valuable Gifts of Providence [Time] to the Fatigue and Drudgery of eternal Visits; Visits that have nothing to recommend them, but formal outside Civility, and empty unmeaning Ceremonies. Or, even supposing a general Acquaintance can be founded upon Friendship and Reason, still this is a Pleasure the Clergyman pays for too dearly with the Loss of his Time, and the Ruin of his Family. Not that a Clergyman is to be debarr'd, any more than another Man, from the noble Privilege of Friendship and Society, this would be to make him an useless melancholy Creature, and would render his Life miserable and burdensome; all that I would beg Leave to recommend is, a due Observance of that most excellent Rule, *Ne quid nimis*. But as you have pass'd

pass'd these wonderful busy Gentlemen over in Silence, so ought I, only to convince you, that I am not so unreasonably prejudic'd to my own Profession, as you are pleas'd to affirm in your Letter of *January* last, wherein you say, " It is no Wonder if I (as a Clergyman) am " for hiding the Spots of my own Cloth, and " for concealing those Faults, which my Conscience tells me I cannot defend." But I most sincerely protest, I am not conscious to myself, that I have overlook'd any one Fault of the Clergy, or industriously conceal'd their Irregularities, much less have I endeavour'd to defend my own Order in any Thing, which justly deserves Censure; No, Sir, I have consider'd my Brethren and myself as we really are, Men, and not Angels, and in Consequence of our Nature, liable to the same Infirmities with the rest of Mankind; and all your Accusations, and Objections against the Clergy, amount to neither more nor less than this very Truth, that they are Men of like Passions with yourself; I mean, Sir, with your former Self, before your " happy " Conversion to Methodism," for your Nature is now spiritualiz'd to such a sublime Degree, as to exalt you far above that earthly Sphere, in which other groveling Wretches heavily move in. Your next Objection against the Clergy, I find is chiefly levell'd against the youngest Sort of this Order, whom you accuse of murdering their Time, from *Monday* to *Saturday*, in such Kind of Employments, as don't greatly become the

the Gravity of their Profession (*viz.*) Shooting, Hunting, and such like Diversions. With regard to Shooting, you think a Clergyman always under Arms, and eternally surrounded with Dogs, is a very unseemly Sight. It has not, I must own, a very good Look, neither is it altogether in Character; but then Sir, there is a wide Difference between making a Trade of a Thing, and a Diversion only; and I should think a Clergyman might now and then amuse himself with an Hour's Hunting, or Shooting, without either neglecting his Parish, or his Studies; and tho' there may be some thoughtless trifling young Fellows, who are but just stepped into Holy-Orders, that have given Occasion to this Objection; yet why must the rest of the Clergy be debarred the Use of all innocent healthful Diversions, because these idle-headed young Sparks make a wrong Use of their Diversions, and turn that into a daily Slavery, which was only meant for a harmless Amusement. For notwithstanding there was a Time, when the Clergy were prohibited from Shooting, &c. yet it was not, I suppose, because there was any moral Turpitude in the Thing itself, but lest the Clergy of those unsettled and turbulent Times should make a wrong Use of their Weapons; and as *Milton* observes of that mighty Hunter before the Lord, — *make Men, not Beasts their Game*, B. XII. v. 30. For I can't conceive what Harm there is in a Clergyman's now and then taking a Day's Diversion of this Nature

Nature by way of Exercise and Amusement ; and when a Thing is innocent in itself, it is not the Use but the Abuse of it which is blameable. As to my own Part, these are Diversions I never take ; but it is because I have not Leisure for so doing ; for I know some Clergymen, who take a Day, or two Day's Diversion in a Season without the least Neglect of Parochial Duty. Besides, a constant sedentary Life does not agree with every Constitution, and a little unbending is as necessary to the Mind as Exercise to the Body ; and why a Man must be deny'd the Use of a Thing which is in itself innocent, and many Ways serviceable to the Health of Mens Bodies, merely for being a Clergyman, I cannot understand. So that this last Objection affects none but such as make a downright Trade of their Diversions, and to the scandalous Neglect of their Parishes, and themselves, turn that into a perpetual Drudgery, which was design'd for a necessary Relief of too close Application to Reading and Study ; and if all Gentlemen, and Lords of Manours would be so good as to whip these sporting Blades out of the Field to their Books, it would be doing them a greater Piece of Service, than either railing at, or reasoning with them. But, as, I believe, there are not many of this hopeful Tribe of *Nimrod*, who have been any Time in the Priesthood, there is less Need to add any Thing more in Answer to an Objection, which favours so rankly of Puritanism, and at the utmost proves nothing, but that

that amongst the younger Clergy there are some few, who, if their Parents and Guardians had thought fit, would have shone to greater Advantage as Game-Keepers, than Parsons; and cut a better Figure in a Green Frock and a French-Horn, than in that formal dull Habit, a Gown and Cassock. Having therefore finish'd your Objections against the Clergy, I beg Leave to appeal to your Reason, whether they are, all put together, a sufficient Plea for a Man to forsake the establish'd Religion of his Country? For even granting that what you say of some of the Clergy, were true of all, (which God forbid it ever should) still this proves no more against the Doctrine and Worship of the Church, than the Irregularity and Intemperance of a Physician, does against the noble Science of Medicine. Your Accusations against the Clergy are no more than a peevish ill-natur'd Satire against human Nature; nor do you say any Thing against us, but what (without Offence it may be spoken) may be said of any other Order of Men in the World; and that can never be admitted as an Argument against any one Set of Men in particular, which is equally true of all; *quod nimis probat, nihil probat*, is a Logical Rule you can't have forgot; and if you would please to apply it to the Case in Hand, I am convinc'd you wou'd immediately withdraw your Allegations against the Clergy, meerly out of Reverence to the rest of Mankind. Well, but say you, " the Clergy " are oblig'd by their Profession to be more

" pious

" pious and exemplary in their Lives than o-
 " ther Men." I readily grant it ; and if I did
 not look upon all Comparisons of this Nature to
 be very ungentle in themselves, and tending to no
 other Good but to stir up Strife and Animosity,
 I think it would not be impossible to shew that
 they are so. And if you can point out several
 Clergymen that are a Scandal to their Profes-
 sion ; so might I mention some Gentlemen,
 whose Lives are a foul Disgrace to every Thing
 call'd Religion, and a daily Reproach to that
 noble Faculty, which, when rightly employ'd,
 makes Men but a little lower than Angels ; but
 when abus'd degrades them beneath the Beasts
 that perish : But as railing is neither my Ta-
 lent, nor my Profession, I shall only ask you,
 whether your Cry against the Clergy proves
 any Thing against the Church ? Does your
 accusing this Order of Men, make any Thing
 against the Order itself ? Or, does your Con-
 science, that great Arbiter of your Actions, as-
 sure you that you are right in forsaking the
 Church of *England*, and flying from the Re-
 ligion of your Country, a Religion into which
 you was admitted by the sacred Administration
 of Baptism, and what is more, have since most
 solemnly ratified your Baptismal Vow in your
 own Person ; will, I say, your Conscience ac-
 quit you for leaving the establish'd Church, after
 you have liv'd in it's Community for above
 thirty Years ; and for no other Reason, but be-
 cause all the Clergy don't live what they
 preach, nor always walk by those Rules, which
 they

they lay down ^{to} others? For this, Sir, is the very Sum of your Objections hitherto; this seems to be the Cause of all your Quarrel; and you might for the very same Reason quarrel with our most excellent Laws, and instead of submitting your Right and Property to the regular Determination of our Courts of Judicature, insist upon having all Causes try'd by a Gang of High-way-men, because some of the Gentlemen of the Long-Robe now and then offer Violence to the Law, and wrest its Meaning to serve some private Ends. And unless you have something to alledge against the Church, as well as against the Ministers of it, and can prove that she is false and erroneous in point of Doctrine, Worship, or Ceremonies, your Cry against the Clergy will never excuse your Separation either in the Eyes of God, or before the Tribunal of your own Conscience. The Irregularities of the Clergy, may justly make you bemoan the deplorable State of the Church under such negligent Pastors, but you ought not to add Affliction to her Bonds, by widening those unhappy Breaches, which it is your Interest as well as Duty to endeavour to stop up and heal. But without trespassing any longer upon your Time, in Answer to your Accusations against the Clergy; let us in the next Place see what it is you object against their Doctrines. Your Objections against the Doctrines of the Clergy, may be divided into those which relate to the Doctrines they do, and those they do not preach. With Relation to the first, you affirm, that you have frequently heard them advance such Doctrines from the Pulpit, as rather tended to encourage Men in Sin, than to dissuade them from it. What these Doctrines were it is hard to

guess, for you don't mention any Particulars. You cannot mean those moral Essays, which I know some Clergymen are mighty fond of, as being what they absurdly call polite and fashionable Discourses; for tho' these Discourses can't be deem'd very proper from the Mouth of one, who professes to teach Christian Doctrines, yet they by no Means in themselves encourage Sin and Vice in any Shape. These meer moral Essays, may indeed by Degrees, lead Men unawares into an over-weening Fondness for natural Religion, which Fondness will insensibly beget an Indifference for Revelation; and this Indifference may, and too often does end in Infidelity and Atheism. But as I hope none of the Clergy give so far into this false Taste of Preaching, as to advance meer moral Subjects without calling in the Assistance of Revelation, and explaining and corroborating the moral Law upon Christian Principles, so I will conclude these are not the Doctrines you are offended at. Neither is it possible to give any Answer to an Objection conceiv'd in such general Terms. But however, you are so good in the very next Sentence, as to acquit most of the Clergy from this Charge of advancing Libertine Doctrines; you confidently affirm, there are "very few of the Clergy, who preach their own Works, or ever write any Sermons at all." Now granting this in Part to be true, yet is a Sermon to be lik'd the worse, purely for being another Man's Writings? If your Minister's Discourse is truly Orthodox, and judiciously adapted to the Capacity of his Hearers, it may do more good, the only End of Preaching, than a Discourse of his own composing. Every Man has not a Knack at writing Sermons; and

and I believe there are several worthy Clergymen, and Men of Letters too, that don't compose every Sermon they preach ; neither can it be expected, that every young Clergyman should be able to make a Sermon or two a Week ; this would be murdering his Time, or at the best spending it in such Exercises, as he can't at that Time of Day be suppos'd over-well * qualified for.

And

* I have often thought, if young Clergymen, for the first 2 or 3 Years after they enter into Orders, were now and then to read Part of a Homily to their Parishioners, instead of preaching other Men's Sermons, or giving them a meer moral Lecture of their own (as is often the Case) it wou'd be more for the Interest of Christianity, and the Benefit of those committed to their Care. And it is well known, this Method of reading the Homilies would be no Innovation, but, strictly speaking, more conformable to the Rubrick. At the End of the *Nicene Creed*, it is left to a Clergyman's Option, whether he will read out of the Homilies, or preach a Sermon of his own : And in the 35th Article relating to the 2d Book of Homilies, the reading of which as well as of that set forth in the Time of *Edward VI.* is judged proper to be done "in Churches by the Minister, diligently and distinctly, that they may be understood of the People." And if it should be objected, that the Reasons for Publishing, and causing the Homilies to be read in Churches are now ceased ; this I absolutely deny : For one chief Reason for recommending the publick Reading of the first Book of Homilies was, as express'd in the Preface to that Edit. publish'd in the Year 1562. "To instruct the Ignorant in the Chief and Principal Points of Christian Religion, and to expel and drive away, as well all corrupt, vicious, and ungodly Living, as also erroneous and poyson'd Doctrines, tending to Superstition and Idolatry." And whether there is not as much corrupt, vicious and ungodly Living now, as then, with several kind of false and erroneous Doctrines, that were never dream'd on when the first Book of Homilies was publish'd, is a Truth too notoriously known to be disputed. Another Reason for setting forth the Homilies was, that "All those who were appointed Ministers, had not the Gift of preaching sufficiently to instruct the People committed unto them, whereof great Inconvenience might rise, and Ignorance still be maintain'd." And I may venture to say, without any Shadow of Reflection, that the same Reason still holds in Part ; for as there were then, so there are now Numbers of Clergymen, and Men of great Worth and Learning, that have not the Gift of Preaching, or Talent of Oratory, neither need the very best of Divines be asham'd now and then to read Part of a Homily to his Audience ; for, as far as I am able to judge by what Books of Divinity I have ever yet seen, the Homilies (allowing for the Times they were wrote in) are the very best Body of Divinity

And if you have no other Objection against your Minister, but because he does not for twenty or thirty Years together, give you a couple of fresh Sermons every *Sunday* of his own composing, I think it is a very sorry Excuse for seeking out for a new Teacher. However, I believe your Complaint against the Clergy for being either too lazy, or too ignorant to compose their own Sermons, is in a great Measure as false as it is ill-natur'd and spiteful: For it cannot be deny'd, but we have great Variety of learned and pious Discourses upon all religious Subjects; and pray give me leave to ask you, who were these Discourses writ by at first? Were they not all, or at least most of them, compos'd by that very Order of Men which you thus dreadfully accuse of Indolence and Incapacity? And if you should say a *Barrow*, a *Tillotson*, and a *Rogers*, are sufficient to stock half the Clergy of the Kingdom with Sermons all their Life-time, this is begging the Question; for, as to my own Part I can truly say (and why may not other Cler-

ever penn'd by Man; the great and fundamental Duties of Christianity are set forth in so strong a Light, and the Faith and Practice of a Christian made so plain and easy, that I have often wonder'd the Reading of these most excellent Discourses should be wholly laid aside, especially since the doing it is left to every Clergyman's Prudence and Choice. And I cannot help thinking, but if the Right Rev. the Bishops, and other ecclesiastical Governors, were to recommend it to young Clergymen to read now and then Part of a Homily prudently chosen, instead of those loose incoherent Essays, neither sound Divinity, nor good Morality, it would be one likely Means to prevent People from running after every Upstart Teacher, and flocking by Crowds even to Quaker-Meetings, for the Sake, as they pretend at least, of hearing Scripture; tho' but a Word here and there absurdly hook'd in; and, like new Cloth upon an old Garment, it is at the best a ridiculous Piece of patch'd Work, and only helps to make Matters worse than they were before. But the Thing is this, that notwithstanding Men do by their Lives contradict the Precepts of the Gospel, yet, (some few excepted,) they justly entertain in their own Minds such a high Veneration for the Bible, that if they can't hear Scripture preach'd at Home, they will be sure to go where they can.

gymen

gymen say the same too?) that I never yet preach'd ten Sermons but what (such as they be) were of my own composing; and still I am so far from applauding myself upon this Account, that I am sure my Time might have been employ'd to much better Purposes; and it would certainly have been more for the Advantage and Improvement of my Hearers, if I had given them a good Discourse of another Man's, instead of a paltry one of my own, which must frequently be the Case when a Clergyman writes a Sermon or two every Week. The next Thing which raises your Indignation against the Clergy, is not on Account of what Doctrines they preach, but such, as you affirm they are silent about (*viz.*) The Doctrines of Predestination, Election, Regeneration, or, as it stands in your Bible, New-Birth. With regard to the Doctrine of Predestination you conclude, that since the Clergy of the establish'd Church are silent about it, therefore they deny it, and in so doing deny those Articles of Religion to which they have most solemnly subscrib'd. Pray Sir, how do you know the Clergy deny this Article of Predestination? Is Silence alone a full Proof of Infidelity? And must a Clergyman be accus'd with denying this Doctrine, because he won't flatter and delude his Hearers, by perswading them they are the Elect of the Lord, and Vessels chosen to Honour. — Besides, your saying the Clergy are silent upon this Article, is utterly false; so that you are unfortunately out in every Part of your Syllogism, not only the Proposition you lay down is false, but, even supposing it true, the Consequence you draw from it is illogical; for the Clergy are so far from either denying, or being silent upon this Article of

Predestination, that it is what they both preach and maintain in a conditional Sense ; and for any Man to affirm God's allwise and just Decrees to be absolute and unconditional, would be paying but a sorry Compliment to that gracious Being, who has declar'd, that he will render to every Man according to his Deeds, whether they be Good, or whether they be Evil. And as to the Article itself of Predestination and Election, it says not a Word about absolute Decrees, it is only deliver'd in general Terms, as may be seen from the Words of the 17th Article, which are as follows. *Predestination to Life, is the everlasting Purpose of God, whereby (before the Foundations of the World were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his Council, secret to us, to deliver from Curse and Damnation, those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of Mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting Salvation, as Vessels made to Honour.* But perhaps, you will say, that since the Article takes no Notice of Good Works, it is a strong Presumption in favour of absolute Predestination. To which I answer, that neither does the Article exclude good Works ; and therefore its being silent is no positive Proof one way or other. But if I were allow'd to speak for the Article, I should think it all along tacitly suppos'd good Works and evil, to be respectively included in the Doctrine of Election and Reprobation ; neither can it be imagin'd, that the Compilers of this Article ever so much as dreamt of setting aside good Works as necessary to Salvation ; they took it for granted there could be no manner of need to mention good Works expressly, or to set that down in the Article, as a necessary Condition of Man's Salvation, which is so strenuously

ously insisted upon in almost every Page of the Gospel-Covenant. But as the Royal Declaration prefix'd to the thirty-nine Articles, wisely forbids Men from entering into any curious and needless Disputes concerning the Sense and Meaning of these Articles of Religion, in which there may be some Things hard to be understood, I shall add no more upon the Article in dispute; but only beg Leave to know, how the Doctrine of absolute Predestination can be reconcil'd either to Reason or the reveal'd Word of God? Sober, unprejudiced Reason tells us, that a Being infinitely wise, just and holy, will never pass such absolute (I had almost said unjust) Decrees upon his Creatures, as the Advocates for absolute Predestination would make him; and Revelation (thanks be to it's Divine Author for it) has put it beyond all Dispute, that Man's Salvation is purchased by Jesus Christ upon Condition of Faith, Repentance and good Works, but not otherwise. This, Sir, is the Doctrine of the Establish'd Church, a Doctrine no ways shocking to a Man's Faith, but founded alike in Reason and Scripture. And that God has chosen out of Mankind all such as walk religiously in good Works, and will of his merciful Bounty, bring them at length, to everlasting Salvation through Christ, is a Doctrine the Clergy of the Church of *England* are so far from being silent upon, that it is their profess'd and avow'd Principle; and therefore your accusing them of Infidelity with Relation to the Article of Predestination, is as groundless, as the Reason you give for it (their Silence) is false.

Another Doctrine which you accuse the Clergy of denying, and for the same Reason as above (*viz.*) their Silence, is that of Regeneration, or New-

Birth. But if by Regeneration you mean being born again in a spiritual Sense of *Water and the Holy Ghost*, if the New-Birth consists in putting on the New-Man, if it is in being made the Sons of God, by Adoption, in dying unto Sin and living again unto Righteousness, if it is in believing, that as the Offspring of *Adam* we are Dead, but as Heirs of the second Covenant alive thro' Christ, then, I dare be bold to say, your Accusation is very unjust. But if by the New-Birth, you mean an absolute putting off of human Nature with all it's inseparable Failings and Infirmities, and a putting on in its Stead, a divine angelical Nature; if, with mistaken *Nicodemus*, you fancy that by being born again, our Saviour means, that we must enter a second Time into our Mother's Womb and be born, in this Sense of the New-Birth, I fear most of the Clergy may be justly call'd Infidels; neither will they, I believe, be cur'd of this their Infidelity, unless your great Patron and his Followers could give some better Proof of their being born again, in this boasted sinless and unspotted State, than by railing at other Men, for still continuing frail and sinful Mortals.

And, now, Sir, I think I have gone thro' all your Objections against the Clergy, both with respect to their Lives and Doctrines; let me therefore beg of you to look back into this Apology, and tell me, wherein I have "conceal'd any of the Foibles of my Profession, or pass'd those Faults over in Silence, which my Conscience told me I could not defend:" This you took for granted I should do; but if you will give yourself the Trouble to read over this little Apology, attentively and impartially, you will find I have not, (knowingly at least) omitted any Thing, which has the least Shadow of an Objection; where
the

the Clergy are justly blameable, I have frankly allow'd it; and where they are treated unfairly, I thought it my Duty to defend them: And whether I have not shewn the Falshood of some of your Accusations, the Disingenuity of others, and the Weakness of all (consider'd as Pleas for Separation) must be left to the Judgment of the candid and unprejudiced Reader. Therefore, Sir, I must be so free as to tell you, that unless you can give some stronger Reasons for your Separation, than any you have hitherto produced, you can never answer it, either to God or your Conscience: For to be guilty of the Sin of Schism, meerly out of Wantonness, and a ridiculous Fondness for Novel-Doctrines, is a Transgression of such a deep Dye, as can never be wash'd out, but by an abundant Stream of his Blood, whose mystical Body you so fatally rend and divide in Pieces. So that I would seriously recommend it to you, to arraign yourself before that impartial Tribunal, your Conscience, let that be your Judge, and yourself both Advocate and Party. Let it ask you the following Questions, and receive your Sentence according to the Uprightness and Integrity of your Heart. Did you leave the Establish'd Church for Conscience Sake, or for the Sake of new-fangled Doctrines? Was your Separation founded in Principle, or the Effect of a wavering unsettled Mind? Was it owing to the neglect of your Minister, or to the Cunning and Artifice of a disguis'd * Jesuit? Did

* It is well known these notable Propagators of Religion act under every Shape but their own, and appear to be every thing sooner than what they really are. They have learnt to practise the Apostle's Rule, of — being made all Things unto all Men, in such an unbounded Latitude, as to stick at nothing that may increase the Number of their Profelytes: for these are such industrious and indefatigable Seducers of Mankind, as to *compass Sea and Land to make one Profelyte*; but I will not

Did you quarrel with your Minister so much on account of his own infamous Life, as for too sensibly reproving the Faults of others? Was it the Man or the Preacher that offended you? Was your Separation a rational deliberate Act, or owing to some little Misunderstanding and personal Prejudices?

Was

not say that when this Profelyte is made, *they* (like the Pharisees of old) *make him twofold more the Child of Hell than themselves*, this can never be; but they may be truly said to make him ten-fold more the Child of Hell than he was before. And here I cannot help observing how fatally the Dissenters are infatuated, by suffering themselves to be deluded by those very Men, against whom they profess such mortal Hatred, and to be made the Dupes of the Church of *Rome*, even while they boast the most perfect Reformation from her Errors, and pretend to be sworn Enemies to every thing that smells of the Pope. For that our Dissenting Brethren are daily imposed upon by *Romish* Emissaries, who hold forth in their Meetings under the Character of *Scotch Itinerant Preachers*, is notoriously known to be Fact. For if one of these sacred Impostors does but rail against the *Common-Prayer*, cry down all Forms, and (like that Arch-Knave *Commin*, who by a certain Figure of Speech had the Title of *Faithful*, not for being true to Jesus Christ, but the Pope) thunder out bitterly against the Vicar of *Rome*, when at the same Time he is endeavouring, (agreeable to that cursed Maxim, *Divide, & Impera*) to extend his Dominions; let but (I say) one of these holy Villains adapt his Discourse to the Taste of the Dissenters, and he is sure to come off with Applause, and leaves behind him the Reputation of a true genuine Protestant, a right heavenly and deep Divine. This is a Game the Jesuits know full well how to play, and is what they have long ago practis'd upon the poor deluded Dissenters in most Parts of the Kingdom. I well remember, when I lived at *Spaldwick* near *Kimbolton* in the County of *Huntingdon*, the Memory of *Whitebread*, alias *White*, a *Romish* Emissary, who was executed in the Time of the *Popish* Plot, was held in great Veneration by some Dissenters in that Place. And upon Enquiry I found he had held forth in that Town, and opened his godly Discourse with bitterly declaiming against the Reformation; at which his Hearers were at first greatly amaz'd and confounded; but he soon chang'd his Notes, and gave them to understand, he rail'd against it, not for what it had done, but for what it had left undone; he was for reforming the Reformation itself; and in great Zeal, insisted upon it, Men could never worship the Lord in godly Simplicity, and in Spirit and in Truth, without hanging up the Bishops, pulling down the Steeples, burning all the Prayer-books, and gracing the Funeral Pile with the Whore of *Babylon's* Smock, unless they should think it meet to gather up some Shreds from the Hearth to make Bands on. This heavenly Discourse made such a lasting Impression upon the Hearts of his ignorant but pious Audience, as to transmit the
same

Was it a truly religious Motive, or some wild enthusiastick Rant, that forc'd you to seek out for a more sublime and spiritual Method of serving God? In a Word, had you any real Objections against the Doctrines of the Church, as well as the Lives of the Clergy? Could you either charge her with Libertinism on the one Hand, or Superstition on the other? Did she either lay too heavy Burdens upon you, or encourage you in an idle dissolute Life? Did you imagine that Salvation was either not to be had within the Pails of the establish'd Church, or that the Terms requir'd to obtain it were too rigorous and burdensome? These, Sir, are Questions necessary to be urg'd home; and it behoves you either to answer them, and thereby satisfy your Conscience in a Point of so great Moment, or else ingenuously to confess your Separation was a rash unthinking Step, and consequently neither founded in Reason nor Religion; and for a Creature styl'd rational, not to be able to give a Reason for what it does, bespeaks the worst Abuse of the best of Gifts, and is but too sad a Proof, that either the Head or the Heart of such a Man is not perfectly sound. Thus far, Sir, of Religion;

same Spirit of Ignorance, Superstition and Schism down from Father to Son to this very Day: For the Village of *Spaldwick*, and indeed a great many other Towns in *Huntingdonshire*, swarms very thick with Dissenters of various Denominations, that have bred out of the Spawn, which this godly Man scatter'd, as he travell'd through this Country. This I mention for the sake of the Dissenters of my own Neighbourhood, that if any one should ask them who was the Founder of their Sect, they may trace it back to Father *Whitebread* of immortal Memory. So that I would not have the Dissenters so over-complaisant to *John Calvin*, as to make him the boasted Father of such a numerous and hopeful Issue; they may with a very little Trouble trace back their Pedigree from his Holiness of *Rome*, instead of stopping at *Geneva*; and may assure themselves, that where *Calvin* has converted his thousands, the Pope by his Creatures has converted his ten thousands.

and

and if any Thing I have said, may induce you and other Separatists to debate the Matter seriously, and to suffer Reason and common Sense to act their proper Part in this Debate, I have gain'd my End. There is still another Part of your Conduct, Sir, which gives me great Uneasiness, and makes me in Pain for your Reason as well as your Religion; leaving but too much Room to suspect your Change in one, was owing to some little Disorder in the other; for how your forsaking the Conversation and Society of your Fellow-Creatures, can be reconcil'd upon the Principles of Reason and good Sense, is not easy to determine: Neither indeed do I know upon what Principle Anchoretism can be defended. For either, Sir, you retir'd from the World for the Sake of leading a more rigid and austere Life (the Hermits pretended Plea) or out of a sullen and gloomy Mind. Now, Sir, if you forsook the Noise of the World, for the Sake of a more severe Piety, and thereby the better to secure your eternal Happiness, this may perhaps at first seem a very pious and godly Motive; but then call to Mind how often we are deceiv'd, even by ourselves, so as to mistake the Shadow for the Substance of Things, and to call that Religion, which is nothing but the meer Effect of a melancholy distemper'd Mind. For, let me ask you what it is which Religion principally requires of us? Is it not to serve God, and to do all the Good we are able to Man? And as to the first great Duty of Religion, *viz.* that towards God, you are greatly deficient in it, even while you think, you are doing your Maker greater Service. For if one main End of divine Worship, be to advance the Honour of him we worship, and if that Man does
the

the greatest Homage to God, who not only keeps his Laws himself, but by an honest and publick Example encourages others to do the like; then, Sir, I cannot see how your sequestering yourself from the World, and “hiding your Candle under a Bushel,” can be promoting the Glory of God, or advancing the Interest of Religion. Neither, Sir, will your eternal Happiness be ever the better secur’d, for thus secreting yourself from the World; for tho’ you may think hereby to escape it’s Temptations, yet you have other spiritual Adversaries to encounter, which are no less dangerous than the World; and for ought I know, the Devil has his Votaries in the Desert as well as in the City, and his gloomy and melancholy Disciples, in as great Numbers as his cheerful and gay ones. The Devil is a compleat Adept in the Art of Sophistry; and knows how to sham false Arguments upon us for true ones, and to make Fallacy pass for Truth itself, Enthusiasm for Devotion, and Superstition for sound Religion.

And with regard to the second Branch of Religion, *viz.* our Duty towards Man, this it is evident you utterly neglect. For instead of being useful to your Fellow-Creatures, by assisting them with your friendly Offices of Humanity, by encouraging the Good, and discountenancing the Evil, you seem to quarrel with all alike; and to act as if you thought the whole Law absolv’d in the strict Observance of a Part, and that God would excuse you for breaking the second Table, if so be you keep but the first. But this, Sir, is such a palpable Absurdity, and so flatly repugnant to the whole Tenor of the Scriptures, that if you had ever read them over attentively and impartially, you would never have fallen into so gross

gross a Mistake. St. James is so far from giving up six Commandments out of Ten (which you are guilty of doing by this Neglect of the second Table) that he affirms, *Whoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one Point, he is guilty of all*: And that supreme and eternal Being, who is the Object of our Adoration, never expects that we should spend every Moment of our Lives in his Worship, to the Neglect of his Commands; and that we are commanded to do all the Good we can to Man, as well as to worship God, is a Truth which no sincere Christian can deny. And were it not that all needless Comparisons of God's Laws, one with another, answer no other End, than to beget unreasonable Prejudices, I think it wou'd be no difficult Matter to point out which those are, that God and our Saviour always lay the greatest Strefs upon; neither does it require any great Depth of Divinity, to determine whether Acts of Mercy and Benevolence towards Mankind, are not of the two more pleasing to God, than Duties merely Devotional. God himself has been pleas'd to declare, *Hos. vi. 6.* that he desires Mercy before Sacrifice, and the (true) Knowledge of him more than Burnt Offerings; and to this Text of the Prophet our Saviour refers the *Jews*, who blam'd him for doing Acts of Mercy on the Sabbath-Day: In one Place he bids them * go and learn what that Expression, *I will have Mercy and not Sacrifice*, meaneth; and in another he tells them, † if they had known the Meaning of it, they would not have condemned the Guiltless. And from hence, Sir, it appears very evident, that God is pleas'd to dispense with Omissions of Devotion, sooner than Neglects and Omissions of doing Good to Mankind; one we are absolutely oblig'd to do, and not to leave the other undone. And with regard to the Hermit's other Reason for an austere recluse Life, viz. The better to secure his eternal Salvation; I fear this is the Dictate of a gloomy distemper'd Mind, or the unhappy Effect of a peevish Temper; which, as it first makes us disagreeable to

* *Matt. ix. 13.*

† *Matt. xii. 7.*

others,



others, so by Degrees it makes others appear disagreeable to us; and this miserable Pride of Soul ends at last in downright Aversion to Company and Conversation; and therefore these Men, to be reveng'd on the World, which is so blind and unmannerly as neither to discover their Merit, nor to use them respectfully enough, resolve within themselves, to bid it a final Adieu, and this they look upon as the most noble Victory over the World, and call that a manful Resistance of its Temptations, which in real Truth is no more than a fullen and cowardly Retreat.

So that let Anchoretism be view'd in what Light you please, I think there is very little to be said in its Favour. For if it is considered upon the Foot of natural Religion, it is very evident the Anchoret defeats one great End of his Creation; Man was certainly never created for himself alone, but was design'd for a sociable useful Being; he was not sent into the World to dream away his Life in Obscurity, nor to live so as merely to gratify himself, but to do what Good he can by an honest laudable Activity, and not to chuse his own Way of Life, but to serve God in that Station he is placed in. Neither do I see how a recluse Life can be reconcil'd to the Precepts of Christianity; The Divine Author of it has strictly commanded us to love and assist one another, to let our Light shine before Men; he all along animates his Disciples and Followers in their worldly Conflicts; encouraging them to maintain their Ground, and neither to flee from nor faint under the Tribulations of the World; all which is a manifest Proof that this Life is a State of War, not with one another, but with our invisible and spiritual Adversaries; and therefore I think it is very evident, that Man may be truly said to desert his Christian Colours, and to deny his Saviour, the great Captain of his Salvation before Men, who fullenly retreats from the World, instead of manfully fighting under Christ's Banner against it, as well as against his other two spiritual Foes, Sin, and the Devil: For this, Sir, is what you have engaged to do, and to continue

Christ's

Christ's faithful Soldier as well as his Servant unto your Life's End.

And now you have my real Opinion with Relation to Anchoretism, which (excuse the Freedom of an old Friend) I cannot help attributing either to a disorder'd Brain, or some unhappy Disappointment in Life, which has ruffled and hurt the natural Evenness of your Mind; or at the best it can be nothing but a blind mistaken Zeal for the Honour of God, which hurries you on to conclude you are doing the greatest Homage to your Creator, by thwarting one of the main Ends of your Creation. All therefore that I shall farther add, is only to assure you, that this Apology, in whatever Sense you may take it, was wrote with no other, than a sincere friendly Design; Neither is it the mere Effect of any Prejudice against the Separatists, or Favour to my own Order, that induc'd me to stand up in Defence of my Brethren, but a sincere Regard for the Church of *England*, whose Communion you have forsaken; and by what I can yet learn, for no other Reason but to gratify an unreasonable Love of Singularity, and an insatiable Fondness of new Teachers and new-invented Doctrines; for that this is actually the chief Motive with most Dissenters, is the real Belief of him, who once had no small Share in your Friendship: and though you may view me at present in another Light, and look upon me as a blinded unregenerate Reprobate; still I hope this will never hurt my own Charity, nor make me affirm your State any otherwise dangerous, than from your too great Security; — And let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall, is the Advice of the Apostle, and the sincere Wish of,

S I R,

Your greatly concerned, and

Much astonish'd Friend, &c.

St. Neots, Huntingdon.
April, 1745.

J. MAUD.

F I N I S.